

Collin County improves customer service, readies for disaster

SITUATION

Collin County contracted an outside company to film source documents in the Clerk's Office. This required two subcontractors, microfilm cameras, and space for the filming operation. The records were then stored in an off-site warehouse.

OBJECTIVE

Eliminate source filming in the Collin County Clerk's Office to save resources, improve productivity and quality, and provide faster customer service. Implement a disaster-proof storage system to safeguard microfilm archives.

SOLUTION

Work with a **Kodak** Reference Archive Service Network member — AmCad — to develop an archive management system, AmCad's INTEGRATED LAND INFORMATION SYSTEM (AiLIS), **Kodak** Document Archive Writers.

COMMENTS

"Our customer service is great, because our turnaround time is amazing. I don't think any other county can match our ability to cashier, index, scan, and return original documents all in the same day."

Collin County, one of the fastest growing counties in Texas, is home to approximately 730,000 people. Seventy of these work at the County Clerk's Office. That many people create many thousands of official documents each year.

"By law, we must have a backup on film for public access to all documents filed in our office," says Stacey Kemp, County Clerk. "With our high volume, we need a quick, high quality, cost-effective way to create microfilm backups and to safeguard the archived files from disaster."

Though Collin County takes advantage of scanning technology, until recently, the Clerk's Office used a manual system to microfilm documents. When a document came into the office, a scan clerk cashiered, indexed, and scanned the document into its proper file in the system. All using today's latest scanning technology.

But then, reducing the efficiencies of scanning technology, the scan clerk had to physically walk the document to the microfilm camera area where two contract workers filmed the source records for long-term storage in an outside warehouse. As a result, when customers brought in their originals for filing or requested a copy of a document, it took the County three or four days just to process and retrieve the film before they could mail the customer a copy of the document.

Two concerns: efficiency and longevity

In 2006, the Collin County Clerk's Office became increasingly concerned about two aspects of its document management system. First, the two-step process where the incoming documents were first scanned and then later microfilmed was not efficient for the organization. Second, they wanted to ensure their archived records were protected from disasters like flood or fire and the effects of time, temperature, and humidity.

Eliminating a step saves resources, adds quality control

Collin County worked with Dan Carlson, Vice President of AmCad LLC — a full-service technology service and solutions provider for government agencies — to create a more efficient and protected reference archive solution for the Clerk's Office. AmCad is a member of Kodak's Reference Archive Service Network. This group of expert firms provides microfilming and archival services of unsurpassed quality throughout the U.S.

"We developed the software that runs the Collin County Clerk's Office from start to finish, which includes cashiering, indexing, imaging, and Internet access. Our system also allows professional filers to E-Record their documents without having to come in to the office," says Carlson.

"They were already scanning their documents. So we created a system that, during the normal scan process, digitally sends FTP files to our facility where they are automatically filmed using our **Kodak**

Document Archive Writers. This eliminates the entire step of separately filming documents, which saves the Collin County office space, time, and labor."

Three sets of film for added assurance

FTP files of each scanned document are automatically sent from Collin County to AmCad, where AmCad's **Kodak** Archive Writers produce three sets of films for each document.

An original is made on **Kodak** silver-halide microfilm for archive and disaster recovery uses, and two are created on **Kodak** Diazo C Microfilm.

The original microfilm copy goes into a Kodak-certified FM200 vault for long-term archival storage. The fire-lock vault is humidity- and temperature-controlled, and for added safety is located on an active military base!

The two copies filmed on **Kodak** Diazo C Microfilm are sent back to Collin County. The County stores one set of archived records for added protection — a planned redundancy in addition to the copy stored in the vault — and the other set is a working copy available for public access to all county records.



Collin County Vault

"AmCad controls the entire process of film creation without subcontractors," notes Carlson. "And our vault is located on-site where the disaster recovery set is stored, which ensures one copy is never exposed to the outside elements."

"We were already scanning documents anyway," says Stacey Kemp, Collin County Clerk, "Now we go straight to microfilm, automatically, from our original scan. It's a much more efficient method of producing film."

Greater control equals higher quality

As a result of this new, streamlined process, Collin County has more control of the quality of its microfilmed images. Because now their scan clerks are the ones who scan the original documents in the first place. Plus, at the storage end, AmCad boasts stringent quality control measures. "We store Collin County's back-film in our vault. When it comes in, we quality check every roll to make sure it has no disease and to be sure what is on the label is actually what is on the film," says Carlson.

"We conduct a detailed inventory and quality control check upon arrival and

then once again every year. If we find a problem or error, we fix it. This gives Collin County their peace of mind, because their film is accurate and totally secure."

Success by all measures

Collin County has covered its bases with disaster readiness. There are three copies of microfilm for every document, all safeguarded.

"Since we've teamed up with AmCad and utilized the expertise of their participation in the **Kodak** Reference Archive Service Network, we've had success on all levels, by all measures. We scan 180,000 documents a year, and they are automatically filmed for us using a seamless process that saves Collin County time and money. We operate more efficiently and quickly, which is ultimately a customer service story," comments County Clerk Kemp, "because with our new 'express' system, we process everything quicker, and that allows us to be more responsive to the citizens of Collin County."

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